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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how scriptwriting can help educators to become more discriminating in determining effective techniques for analyzing and producing instructional television programs (ITV). The use of scriptwriting to design and develop locally produced videotapes is described, and special instructions are given for educators in settings where there are limited financial resources. Ways in which instructional television is currently incorporated into educational environments are mentioned and a 5-step approach for planning an instructional television script is provided. (MER)

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SCRIPTWRITING AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION

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Television production can be as sophisticated as a $350,000 network musical-variety special or as simple as a single camera production of a local high school football game. No matter what the level of sophistication is, every television production needs a script, outline or plan of action to insure success. Some television scripts are detailed with word-for-word dialogue and specific directions for camera shots to enhance the visual impact. Other productions may require scripts that are no more than an outline of the routine as in a two-shot (two people in the scene) production of a host and his guest in a question-and-answer television format.

Writing the television script helps the educator accomplish the following:

(1) determine the purpose or objectives of the television presentation,

(2) present the content of the presentation and the approaches to reach the objectives,

(3) describe the visual/verbal sequence, routine and production instructions that are necessary to videotape the actual presentation.

In a small school or rural education setting, money and personnel for locally produced televison productions are in short supply. That is why it is important to plan locally produced videotapes carefully.

Scriptwriting is an effective method to design and develop successful locally produced videotapes. Scripts can save rural teachers time and small schools money because they help teachers to plan what it is they want to communicate to their audience. Three sources for television production and scripts are Kemp's (1980) Planning and

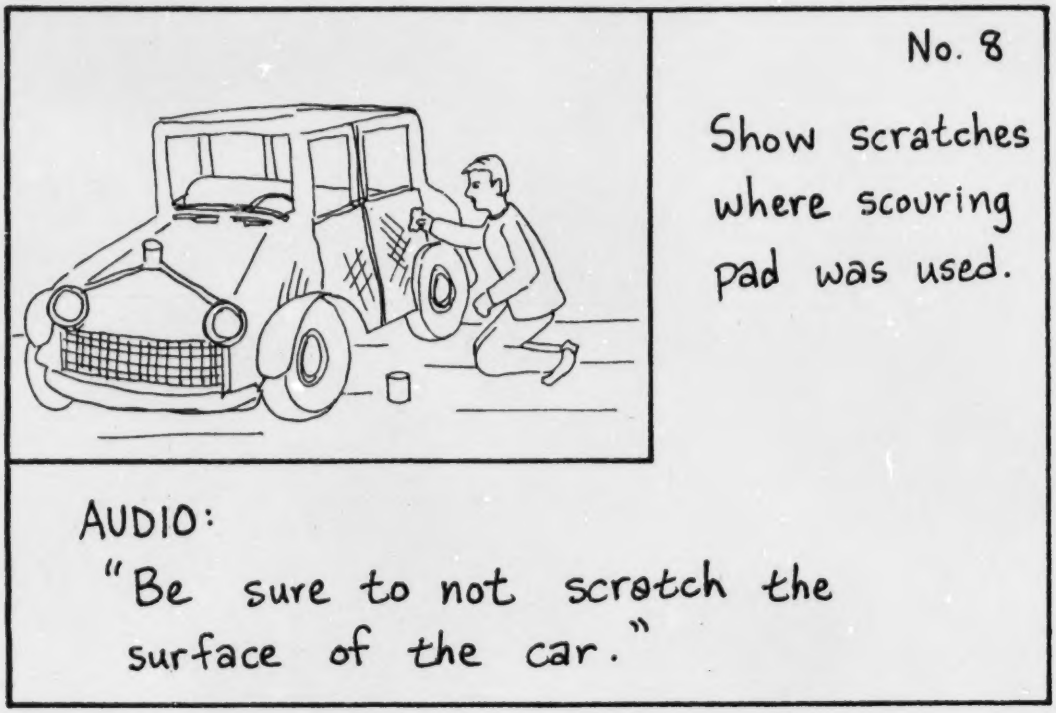
Producing Audiovisual Materials, Nash and Oakey's (1974) The Screenwriter's Handbook, and Wurtzel's (1979) Television Production.

A script can take many formats and there may be several scripts and rewrites of those scripts before the actual production begins. One kind of script is the "rundown sheet" which lists the video portion on the left side of the page and the audio on the right side, such as:

Video	Audio
1. Two shot: Medium shot of Mr. Jones and his guest, Miss Smith, Camera No. 1.	1. Music background fades after 10 seconds; Mr. Jones introduces his guest and the topic for discussion: "Rural Education in Kansas."
2. Move Camera No. 1 to C.U. (close-up) of guest with a pan to the right and zoom in.	2. Miss Smith gives an opening statement on the topic.
3. Camera switch to No. 2 Camera for a C.U. of Mr. Jones.	3. Mr. Jones asks the first question: "How does rural education in Kansas differ from rural education in other states?"

Usually the video side of the script is left as blank as possible so that written notations can be made about camera shots during the taping. Visual elements such as titles, graphics, camera switches, special effects, and slide or film inserts are placed in the video column.

The teacher can also use storyboards or planning cards in a television production either as a means to developing the final script or in place of a script. There are many forms of storyboards, but they all include rough sketches of each shot in the television production. Here is an example of one storyboard format:



In the upper left-hand corner of a 4"x6" card, the teacher roughly sketches figures of the major visual elements of each camera shot. To the right of this sketch, the teacher writes out any specific directions as to what is important in this visual information (camera angle, movement of the actors, essential visual elements). At the bottom of the storyboard card the teacher writes the verbal or audio portion of the television presentation. Storyboards may also be used in a script format (see Figure 1).

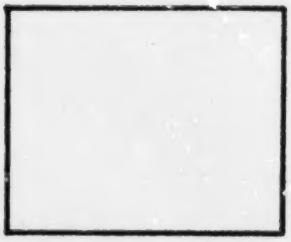
Video Camera Directions	Visual Sketch	Audio
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		3.

Figure 1. Storyboard Script

Storyboard or planning cards allow the production crew (AV director, student television camera operators, teachers, etc.) to visualize the production before it actually begins. The cards can be rearranged, new cards can be added, and cards can be deleted to organize the best possible production. As a result, the production crew can forsee problems and work them out ahead of time. It is a good idea at this stage to ask someone who is not associated with the television production to come in and evaluate the program as a kind of pretest. Because storyboards allow teachers to evaluate the program before they start to produce the videotape, there is a considerable savings in time. Also, graphic art work, props, and materials for a demonstration can be made or gathered and actors' and crew's time scheduled for a smooth, efficient use of time and resources. Finally, scripts and storyboards force the teacher to make decisions about what it is he is really trying to communicate, how he is going to communicate this information to his audience and in what sequence he is going to transmit that information.

Most locally produced television for instructional purposes is used in four ways: for making self-evaluations, for doing demonstrations of a skill or showing the steps and procedures in a task, for role playing, or for recording guest lectures, school sports events and public relations activities. Self-evaluation is one of the best uses of locally produced television. Students can critique and evaluate reports and speeches, rehearsals in a school play, psycho-motor skills in physical education classes, and specific skills that require visual action. Such uses of videotape have been very effective because of the immediate feedback. Unlike motion picture film, videotape can be recorded on over and over again. Teachers can also store videotapes for

review or reinforcement at a later time. Seeing videotaped procedures and steps for a particular task, demonstration or experiment allows all students to have a front seat in the classroom. Any task or skill which requires movement, is sequential, and has visual elements is ideal for videotaping.

Role playing is another good example of television use in the schools. Through role playing, students can experience insights on how others act, think and feel. Video rehearsal for a job interview can help prepare students for future job interviews and make them less stressful. Television production can also help motivate students because it allows them to see themselves in action. Through editing techniques, the teacher can present to students desired performance and behavior on videotape.

Sometimes students themselves are the best resources for generating creative videotapes. One technique is to have students make commercials to teach their peers about concepts that need to be learned. Students learn to organize and construct a body of knowledge and transmit that knowledge through a television commercial. For example, a student might develop a lesson in geography through a two-minute airline commercial. Or a public service announcement could be developed by a group of concerned students to communicate the hazards of nuclear waste disposal.

Another area in which schools are just beginning to use videotape is video therapy (Greelis & Haarmann, 1980). Traditional therapy had the teacher or therapist present desirable models to the child. In video therapy the child becomes the model resource and the focal point of the therapy session. Positive self-models are developed through role

playing, visual reinforcement, and editing of the videotape.

We recommend that teachers who wish to produce instructional television in their schools use the following steps:

(1) Decide exactly what it is you want to teach. What are the objectives of your message?

(2) Gather the content of your message. This content may come from your lecture notes, the library, a lesson you have already planned, a special knowledge you may already have.

(3) Figure out your treatment or approach to your topic. This will depend on your expertise in the subject matter and your audience.

(4) Sketch out storyboards to help yourself design and organize your television production.

(5) Write a script.

The future of videotape in rural education and small schools depends on its wise and effective use. Teachers must plan carefully to insure successful local production of television. Scriptwriting and storyboard cards are important means to that end.

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